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IN turning over the leaves of Mr. Brandon's work on "Parish Churches," the observer cannot avoid being struck by the diversity of forms and varied effects apparent in structures identical in purpose, and so similar in general arrangement as these buildings necessarily are. A nave, with aisles or without; a porch on the south side of this, at the west end; a chancel growing out of the nave, and a tower, or bell-turret, as the case may be, are the features which go to make our ancient parish churches: the same class of windows, mouldings, and decorations, was used in all churches built within particular periods;—and yet no two are exactly alike, but all present singular differences, and have beauties entirely their own. Built on the same type, representations of the same feelings, provisions for the same wants, compounds of the same details,—the result, as a whole, is still so different, that it is only within a very short period of time, that it was discovered these buildings can all be classed under four heads, according to the date of the erection, and that, knowing this date, we may with tolerable certainty predict the components of the structure,—know what we may expect to find and where to find it.

This diversity, co-existent with uniformity, resulted from able minds working on the same principles and modes, controlled by existing circumstances, and could not have been produced by slavish copying. Ideas were of course constantly borrowed: what had been done served as the point from which to start again, and there were always inferior minds contented to follow where the master minds led. Moreover, that they were in the possession of formulæ by which certain satisfactory results were invariably obtained, seems clear. Unless some system were followed, Mr. Fergusson remarks in his "Inquiry," "We must admit that between the ages of St. Louis and our Edward III., there was born, in every great town of western Europe, an architect capable of designing a great cathedral, and in every village one capable of building a parish church; and that all this myriad of architects were endowed with the same modicum of genius, for all the buildings of that age, whether great or small, bear a nearly equal impress of perfection; and that this great race perished entirely in the following century, for the art of erecting such buildings was lost soon after it reached its highest point."

We are disposed to attach more importance to the efforts of the *one man* and his influence on the works of the multitude, than the author last quoted does; but that some system was followed, and that these productions were the result of a nation's labour, and above all of the upper and most intellectual classes of society, we are fully satisfied.

Let us look back, however, to "Parish Churches," the interesting and useful volume which led us to the foregoing remarks,* and we shall see in every example an evidence of the diversity and originality to which we referred.

This work contains views of sixty-three churches, from sixteen counties; nearly half of the illustrations, however, are from Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. In the first view, Little Casterton Church, Rutlandshire, the west wall is continued up, and has two arched openings in it for bells, surmounted by gables, while against the face of the wall below are two massive buttresses in the line of the belfry, which produce a tower-like form, and give character at little cost.* The plan of the nave and aisles is a square, and the chancel is a double square.

At Howell Church, Lincolnshire, the west wall, to the extent required for a similar double belfry, is made to project slightly; and in Manton Church, Rutlandshire, with the same double belfry, one gable encloses the two openings, as it does also at Howell Church, and there is a buttress runs down the *centre* of the front.

At Herne Church, Kent, an interesting example, the tower, of massive proportions, is placed at the west end of the north aisle, and was built quite distinct from the church. The lower story, open to the church by means of arches, is groined over, and is made the baptistery. Brampton Church, Northamptonshire, is remarkable for its regularity the tower, with broach spire, is in the centre of the west end; a porch on the south side is balanced by a porch on the north.

In Temple Balsal Church, Warwickshire, an octagonal stairs' turret, which scarcely shews at the south angle of the west front, is enlarged at the eaves of the roof to a square tower. Warmington Church, Northamptonshire, a pure Early English church, shews in its beautiful broach spire three ranges of spire lights surmounted by elegant crosses.

In Fleet Church, Lincolnshire, the tower is detached, and stands on the south side. In Donnington Church, Lincolnshire, the tower is on the south side of the nave aisle: the lower part of it is made to form the south porch. In Leckhampton Church, Gloucestershire, the tower is over the western extremity of the chancel, and in Clymping Church, Sussex, it is at the southern extremity of the south transept.

We cannot attempt to note all the observations which occur on examining the plans and views here brought into juxta-position. One more, however, we cannot avoid making, and that is, the uniformity apparent in the size of the *chancel* of a large number of the examples given, however different the size of the rest of the building. Thus the length of the chancel of Trunch Church, Norfolk, is 34 feet 6 inches; Westwick Church, Norfolk, 31 feet 10 inches; North Mims, Herts, 32 feet 3 inches; Floore Church, Northamptonshire, 33 feet 6 inches; Etton Church, Northamptonshire, 35 feet 9 inches: Brampton Church, Northamptonshire, 31 feet 10 inches; Casterton Church, Rutlandshire, 32 feet; Long Stanton Church, Cambridgeshire, 29 feet 3 inches; Filby Church, Norfolk, 34 feet; Martham Church, Norfolk, 34 feet; Deopham Church, Norfolk, 32 feet 4 inches; Morley St. Botolph's Church, Norfolk, 34 feet 6 inches; Woolpit Church, Suffolk, 32 feet 8 inches; Achurch Church, Northamptonshire, 32 feet; Islip Church, Northamptonshire, 30 feet 6 inches; Gransley Church, Northamptonshire, 31 feet 6 inches; Shiere Church, Surrey, 32 feet 2 inches; Barton Church, Suffolk, 34 feet. The width is, in nearly every case, half the length.

It is much to be regretted that many of the churches named are, as we happen to know, in a miserably-neglected and decaying state. It is much to be wished that the desire to uphold and restore the evidences of our forefathers' piety and our forefathers' skill, now happily apparent in many quarters, may extend to the guardians of these,—and equally so that our architects, regarding these as proofs of the boundless variety of combinations obtainable in their art, should be led to work on the *same system* as their mediæval predecessors, rather than from the *same moulds*, and be ARTISTS instead of artificers.

* Parish Churches; being Perspective Views of English Ecclesiastical Structures: accompanied by Plans, drawn to a uniform scale, and letter-press descriptions. By R. and J. A. Brandon, Architects. Bell, Fleet-street.

* A similar arrangement is found in Long Stanton Church, Cambridgeshire.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF INTERNAL ECCLESIASTICAL DECORATION.

THESE arguments, it is hoped, will remove in some measure the prejudices existing in many minds against internal ecclesiastical decoration, as well as direct the attention of the members of the Protestant church to its importance.

The desire of multiplying churches and chapels is so great, that all available funds are too frequently lavished on walls and roofing—those absolute requisites to protect congregations from the weather. If decoration be at all considered, it is only with reference to their *external* architectural features, which is farther advanced in public favour than interior adornment. The question to be considered is, whether it would not strengthen the best interests of the Protestant church, and be its wisest policy, to build fewer, and render those already built worthier their consecrated purpose? Places of worship at present exhibit too much of factory-building economy; they awaken no reverence: designed for man rather than God, his mean and selfish nature pervades them: there is no evidence of his having devoted his highest powers to the service of the Most High. They do not burst upon the view as visible prayers ascending to the Creator, but are cold, dumb, and unthankful.

All funds are exhausted either before or at the time when internal decoration ought to be considered, so that those who may be inclined to favour it, but who do not possess sufficient influence to control the funds, are obliged to acquiesce and yield the gratification of their rational desire. This fact ought to be taken into consideration in forming any estimate of the numbers really opposed to it, and while prejudice is in the ascendant, Protestant places of worship will be left mere carcases, without the soul of internal decoration. Would it not be better to neglect the exterior rather than the interior? Interior splendour would be typical of the Christian character, which ought not to consist in mere outward show, but in the inward and spiritual grace. It may be said by some that all decoration is mere outward show; so it is—but surely it is an outward show preferable to that of ugliness and deformity: is not all beauty a full voiced choir of praise? A lively faith, with an unsuppressed will, is irresistibly led to manifest itself in all possible directions, compelling dumb inanimate wood and stone to echo its admiration—reconciling discordant sounds and colours into harmonious love and praise.

It is not known to the writer on what ground any Christian can reasonably, or even consistently, object to painting and sculpture in the internal architectonic decoration of churches and chapels, who admits the propriety of their external decoration, or musical performance within them. It is not known why the sense of hearing should precede sight in its holy gratification, except that it obeys the law of intellectual progression, namely, that the highest sense is the last gratified. Vision has always been considered the least gross and material of the senses; the idea of this power is extended to express Deity, as "The All-seeing"—its relative position in the human frame is typical of its superiority. If this be true, there would be no more harm in

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